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Montana's Foster Parent

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Ann Burds

Social and Rehabilitation Services
836 Front Street
Helena, Montana

December '74 - January '75

Dear Foster Parents:

Does anyone remember what your New Year's Resolution was for 1974? Let me refresh your memories. First, there are the regulars; lose ten pounds, stop smoking, read one book a month, get along with the in-laws, smile at least once a day, go to church every Sunday, find a new job, cut down on social drinking, learn one new word a day.

Then there are the irregulars (which are just about as easy to keep); teach the entire family to enjoy Monday Night Football, learn the first names of all the members of the British Parliament, discover 365 new and innovative ways to cook hamburger, design a socio-economic chart of turkey farmers in Northern Alaska, or write a book entitled "Luxurious Living on $2.00 A Day."

So what will it be for 1975? Don't be too hard on yourself. In fact, I can think of one New Year's Resolution that almost everyone could benefit from. It's called joining a club - foster parent association, for instance!

Christmas is approaching quickly and Santa's bag might be a little skimpier this year, but if his face is still jolly that's most important!

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WISHING YOU A SNOWY CHRISTMAS

AND A SUNNY NEW YEAR.

Ann Burds

CRIB SAFETY*

Parents, grandparents and others who are buying a new crib or fixing up an old one should be aware of specific safety features --- now mandatory in the manufacture and sale of new cribs and which can be considered when refurbishing an old one.

The U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, which developed the crib safety regulation that went into effect February 1974, estimates that 150 to 200 children die each year and about 50,000 others are injured seriously enough to require medical treatment in accidents involving infant cribs. The new standards include the following requirements:

- CRIB SLATS CAN BE NO MORE THAN 2 3/8 INCHES APART SO THAT BABIES BODIES CANNOT SLIP THROUGH THE SLATS.
- CRIB SIZES WILL BE STANDARDIZED TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF INJURY RESULTING FROM POORLY MATCHED MATTRESSES AND CRIBS.
- LOCKS AND LATCHES ON THE DROPSIDE OF A CRIB MUST BE SAFE AND SECURE FROM ACCIDENTAL RELEASE OR RELEASE BY THE CHILD INSIDE THE CRIB.
- MANUFACTURES MUST MARK EACH FULL SIZE CRIB AND CRIB CARTON WITH INFORMATION AND WARNINGS CAUTIONING THE BUYER TO USE A MATTRESS WHICH MEETS CERTAIN SIZE SPECIFICATIONS.

Cribs incorporating the new safety features have been on the market since February. However, cribs manufactured and shipped in inter-state commerce prior to February 1974 can still be sold, regardless of whether or not they meet the new standards. Therefore, the Commission urges parents and others to familiarize themselves with the safety standards.

Information on the standards, and on making old cribs more accident proof, are contained in the pamphlet Crib Safety, available in single copies or in quantity from the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D. C. 20207 (CPS Pub. No. 6305-74). The pamphlet and additional material on the 1973 crib safety regulation may also be order by dialing the Commissioner's toll free product safety hotline -- 800-638-2666.

** Taken from Children Today Magazine, Nov. - Dec. 1974, U. S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare*

FOSTER CARE LEGISLATION

The monthly board rate study has been completed and I would like to thank everyone who helped by keeping a record of expenditures over the thirty day period. The completed study on foster care legislation has been sent to every legislator who was elected in November for their consideration in the upcoming Forty Fourth Session. Copies of the study are available from John Lombardo for anyone who might be interested.

Briefly, the MSFPO has requested an increase in monthly board payments, and that SRS assume financial responsibility for liability insurance for all foster parents. The possibility of establishing an initial clothing allowance with SRS participation is still being researched.

I strongly urge foster parents from around the state to attend the committee hearings on foster care legislation when they are being held. By so doing, the legislators will be able to listen to your own personal feelings about the issues before they vote.

Code Of Ethics

During the National Foster Parent Conference in Spokane last April, the Association adopted a "Code of Ethics for Foster Parents." The Preamble concludes with the statement that: Each foster parent has an obligation to maintain and improve the practice of fostering constantly to examine, use and increase the knowledge upon which fostering is based, and to perform the service of fostering with integrity and competence.

Please seriously consider the following:

PRINCIPLES

In order to provide quality foster care services, foster parents subscribe to the following principles:

1. I regard as my primary obligationg the welfare of the child served.

2. I shall work objectively with the agency in effecting the plan for the child in my care.

3. I hold myself responsible for the quality and extent of the services I perform.

4. I accept the reluctance of the child to discuss his past.

5. I shall keep confidential from the community information pertaining to any child placed in my home.

6. I treat with respect the findings, views and actions of fellow foster parents, and use appropriate channels, such as a foster parent organization, to express my opinions.

7. I shall take advantage of available opportunities for education and training designed to upgrade my performance as a foster parent.

8. I respect the worth of all individuals regardless of race, religion, sex or national ancestry in my capacity as a foster parents.

9. I accept the responsibility to work toward assuring that ethical standards are adhered to by any individual or organization providing foster care services.

10. I shall distinguish clearly in public between my statements and actions as an individual, and as a representative of a foster parent organization.

11. I accept responsibility for working toward the creation and maintenance of conditions within the field of foster family care which enable foster parents to uphold the principles of this code.

Some would gather money from along the path of life,
Some would gather roses and rest from worldly strife;
But I would gather children from among the thorns of sin,
I would seek a curl and a freckled, toothless grin.

For money can not enter in that land of endless day,
And the roses that are gathered soon will wilt along the way;
But oh! the laughing children as I cross the sunset sea,
And as the gates swing wide to heaven, I can take them in with me.

Anonymous - selected

local·state·and national news

There is an ever increasing need of foster homes for both teenagers and the developmentally disabled. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please urge them to contact your local welfare department. Foster parents are the best recruiters of new homes.

FOSTER CHILD SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE STILL AVAILABLE BY WRITING TO JOHN LOMBARDO, 1934 HAUSER, HELENA, 59601. DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION OF APPLICATIONS IS FEBRUARY 1, 1975.

A meeting will be held in early January with 4-C's (Community Coordinated Child Care) to discuss the possibility of organizating a State Action for Foster Children Committee. A report on this meeting will be in the next newsletter.

MONTANA HAS MORE MEMBERS WHO BELONG TO THE NATIONAL FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION THAN ANY OTHER STATE IN REGION VIII.

During the month of November, I attended county foster parent association meetings in Billings, Sidney and Libby.

In Billings, a group of local legislators was present for a question and answer session to discuss foster care legislation, especially an increase in monthly board payments. The legislators were very receptive to this idea and urged the foster parents to attend the committee hearings when they take place in January.

In Sidney, I was asked to give a presentation on child abuse. But, due to technical difficulities (the film projector didn't work), I was unable to show the film. Instead, we held a discussion on child abuse and I will send the film in January. I also had the opportunity of meeting foster parents in the Sidney area and that was most enjoyable.

In Libby, again I gave a presentation on child abuse. This time the projector worked and we held an interesting discussion afterwards. This also was an opportunity for me to meet foster parents in the northwest corner of the state and I enjoyed the experience. Besides, I came to the conclusion that if anyone would like snow in their area, just ask me to come to your local foster parent meeting. It seems to follow me wherever I go!

May the fragrance of pine
Bless your house long after
The last guest has gone
And the echos of laughter

May your heart remain filled
With warm thoughts and good cheer
And the spirit of Christmas
All through the year.

Louise Hajek

Attention M.S.F.P.O. Board Members

The MSFPO Board of Directors Meeting will be held February 8th in Great Falls. The agenda for the meeting has not yet been completed. A few items will be: Legislation, Nominations for 1975 MSFPO officers, the National Foster Parent Conference in Atlanta, and Aubrey Kellogg, Region VIII Vice-President of the National Foster Parent Association, will show a film on foster care and also briefly discuss the Leadership Training Seminar that he attended in St. Louis. More specific information on the meeting will be sent to each of the board members in early January. PLAN TO ATTEND.

foster parent education

A special thank you to all who took time to respond to my questions regarding foster parent education in the last newsletter. I have tried to answer each letter personally. In the near future, I hope to set up a foster parent education committee so that we may establish some positive and realistic goals. Anyone interested in serving on the committee?

Just in time for Christmas!

First the good news -- Montana's Foster Parent Manuals have been mailed. By this time everyone on my current mailing list should have received a copy. Now the bad news -- everyone that is, except 45 people. Various circumstances have caused this oversight. The original has been sent back to the printer with a request for an additonal 1000 copies. When these have been printed, they will be sent to the 45 people and a bulk amount to each of the county and district welfare offices to be distributed upon request.

To those who have already received the manual, I would welcome any comments you might have about it -- good, bad, or indifferent.

The mind--

is bound by many cords

of logic and of reason

while

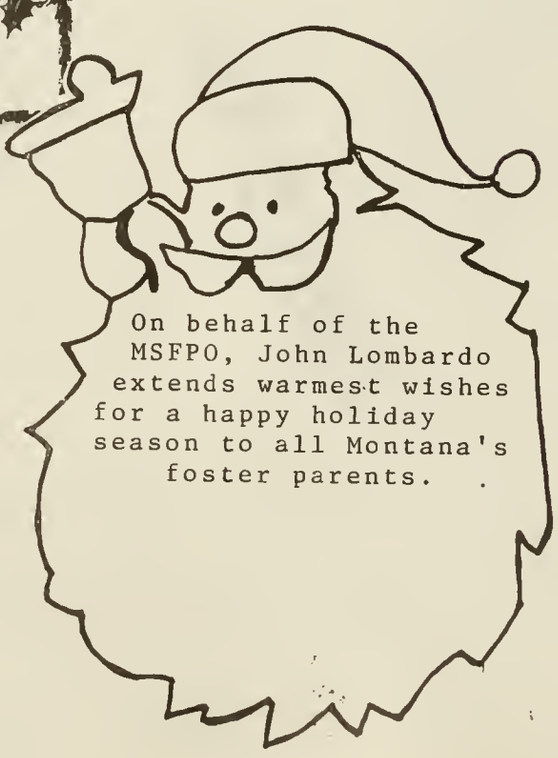
the heart

is often bound by

the invisible thread

of a single memory.

--Winston O. Abbott.



On behalf of the MSFPO, John Lombardo extends warmest wishes for a happy holiday season to all Montana's foster parents.

State of Montana
Social & Rehabilitation Services
P. O. Box 1723
Helena, MT 59601
ATTN: Ann Burds

FIRST CLASS